



## Chico waits for fish ladder funding

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CHICO — The city of Chico is slowly moving forward with securing funding for more than \$2 million in improvements to fish ladders on Big Chico Creek in Bidwell Park, above Salmon Hole.

Funding is in the pipeline for \$1 million through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Dennis Beardsley, city General Services director, said that money has not yet been allocated, but Sierra Nevada Conservancy officials have said they are confident those grant funds will arrive.

At a meeting today in Lake Isabella, the Conservancy will consider the previously-certified mitigated negative declaration.

The city has already secured \$200,000 from Caltrans, Beardsley said, and will need about \$850,000 more in yet-to-be-found grant funds to make the project move forward.

The hope is to find funding to start construction by 2011, he said. The project would include repair of existing weirs, modifying weirs and installing six new weirs on the fish ladders.

The existing fish ladder was built in the 1950s for spring-run Chinook salmon, and has deteriorated over time. Beardsley said the current plan has been in the works for "eight years and counting."